Why Employers Aren't Calling You Back

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The job search can be frustrating enough, without the disappointment of sending in your resume and cover letter to a job you feel perfectly qualified for, only to receive no feedback, interview, or comments from the employer. Before you take it personally or launch an all-out assault of emails, phone calls and pestering online, consider that maybe you didn't make yourself compelling enough to the hiring managers or recruiters.

There are many reasons why an employer isn't contacting you. Five reasons to pay attention to include:

1. They don't feel they *know* you. Did you forget to include insight into your passions, personality and goals? You're not a robot and companies are looking to hire real people with real character and values. Make sure your resume, cover letter, email and social media sound like you are an interesting and relatable human being who shares similar values to the company to which you are applying. These things matter to hiring managers.

2. You didn't do your research on the company. Did your resume and cover letter sound generic? If you don't customize your information to the specific company and culture you're applying to, you make it hard for the reader to envision you working there. There is a treasure trove of information about companies, industries, and the hiring team online. Learn all you can about the company's goals, history, competition and industry trends. This should be reflected in the value you can offer them as indicated in your cover letter and resume.

3. You haven't made it clear *why you?* A hiring manager I know tells her team, "We aren't looking for someone who wants a job. We are looking for someone who wants this job!" Employers look for candidates who make it easy to see how they would fit into the job and meet objectives, and why they are a good fit. Each interviewer is comparing each candidate against others who sell themselves into the job and the company. While this might feel awkward for someone with a military background, employers expect you to self-promote and make the connection easy for them.

4. Formatting mistakes, typos and grammatical errors. Have at least two people

review your resume for typos and grammar mistakes. These will jump out to a hiring manager or even an online application system – they all look for errors. The thought is, if you can make an error on the application, resume or cover letter, you won't pay attention on the job. Ensure your information is error-free and formatted to read on any system – a PDF version of your material is best, if possible.

5. What you've posted online. Your online profiles, comments, photos and exchanges are public information. Many employers use social media to evaluate the consistency of how you promote yourself versus who you really are (what they see online is believed to be more a truthful reflection of your values, passions, interests and goals.) All of your social media is part of the job search process. Remember that when you rant or share something offensive. Employers will see it and consider whether you are a good candidate to consider.

In addition to what you might be doing to make it hard to be considered, employers are busy. They typically receive many more resumes for open positions than they can reasonably consider. Make your resume visually stand out, easy to understand, relevant to the open job, and relatable to the company culture to stand the best chance of getting a call for an interview.

Developed through the VFW's collaboration with Lida Citroën of the international brand strategy firm LIDA360, this article is part of the VFW's expanding education and transitioning services, resources and webinars designed to provide service members and veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce with an opportunity to learn about personal branding and strategies for navigating the job search process. To learn more about Lida's commitment to the veteran community, check out her recent TEDX talk.

Join us for our free webinar with Lida on October 31, 2017 at 2 p.m. CDT on Navigating the Differences Between Civilian & Military Life & Career. Register today.

By Lida Citroën, CEO, LIDA360